

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Richard Sasaki, 68, retired police officer

" . . . when the Outrigger Canoe Club was built, my dad was manager of that club for over twenty-five years. Prior to that, my family lived on Tusitala Street. And then that's where my oldest brother was born. Then they moved to Outrigger Canoe Club where my second brother and my sister was born. Then they moved over to 'Ōhūa Lane, what today is 'Ōhūa Avenue. That's where I was born."

Richard Sasaki was born in 1918 in Waikīkī, O'ahu to Mitsue and Soichi Sasaki, immigrants from Yamaguchi-ken, Japan. His mother did domestic work in private homes; his father was employed by the Cleghorn family, Seaside Hotel, and the Outrigger Canoe Club. At the Outrigger Canoe Club, his father ran the concessions/lockers for over twenty-five years.

The Sasakis resided in Waikīkī from the early years of this century to circa 1951.

Richard Sasaki, a 1937 graduate of McKinley High School, joined the Honolulu Police Department in 1940. He retired as a lieutenant in 1974.

Tape No. 13-92-1-86

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Richard Sasaki (RS)

May 27, 1986

Mānoa, O'ahu

BY: Michi Kodama-Nishimoto (MK)

MK: This is an interview with Mr. Richard Sasaki at the Oral History Project's office in Mānoa, O'ahu. The date is May 27, 1986. The interviewer is Michi Kodama-Nishimoto.

Okay. So for the first question for today, Mr. Sasaki, tell me what your mother's name was.

RS: My mother's name was Mitsue Sasaki.

MK: And what do you remember about her family background?

RS: My mother was the daughter of a samurai according to my grandmother. My grandmother came here to live with us since I was a child after my grandfather passed away in Japan.

MK: And what was your father's name?

RS: My father's name, if I remember correctly, is Soichi Akinaka, supposed to be, something like that.

MK: And why is it that your father became a Sasaki instead of staying as a Akinaka?

RS: Because my mother was the only child in the family and my grandparents wanted her to carry the name, I guess.

MK: And what do you know about your father's family background?

RS: I don't know anything about that. He had a brother or two in Japan. I remember my mother arguing with him because he used to send money back to the brother.

MK: And where were your parents from in Japan?

RS: Yamaguchi-ken, Oshima-gun, Oshima Island and Komatsu-machi. That's the town part of that island.

MK: So both of them came from the same place, then?

RS: I guess so, but I remember now they were telling me. They had a picture of the old house. My mother's [family] used to manufacture shōyu to sell to the people in the machi. And also on my mother's side they had land, whole mountainside, and he donated the land to some church there.

And when I was a youngster I heard from the neighbor who used to stay in Japan who told my father why didn't he sell--why didn't he keep the land and just log maybe one or two trees and donate that to the church because the trees were that old--you know that sugi they call it, that made that geta, just like a balsa wood. And he donated the land to the church. So we lost out--us you know.
(Chuckles)

And also my mother had oceanfront land that was through my grandfather, couple of acres, and since she came over here, she didn't pay tax on it or nothing, so the government took it over and I heard they had some salt plant on their land.

MK: Too bad, yeah. And then what do you know about your parents' experiences in Hawai'i before they started living in Waikīkī?

RS: I heard that they came over to work on a sugar plantation. I don't know what year but then they moved to Waikīkī to work.

MK: So when they moved to Waikīkī to work, can you tell me from the beginning where your father worked first?

RS: I cannot tell you exact time but I remember--he talking about that he worked for the Cleghorns. I think the name was Archibald Cleghorn. And he was half-brother to Princess Ka'iulani. And I have a pocket watch given to me from my parents although it doesn't work. The face has a picture of Princess Ka'iulani. They were saying it was given to them and after that he went to work for Seaside Hotel.

MK: Going back a little bit, when you said that he worked for the Cleghorns what kind of work did he do for the Cleghorns?

RS: Oh. . . . My mother did the cleaning and the house and you know, cooking for them. And I don't know what my father did then, but maybe take care of the yard, I don't know.

MK: And then he worked for the Seaside Hotel?

RS: Right.

MK: Where was the Seaside Hotel those days?

RS: Seaside Hotel was just 'Ewa of the old Outrigger Canoe Club, right about where part of Royal Hawaiian Hotel is now.

MK: And would you know what the Seaside [Hotel] used to look like?

RS: It was a one-story building but I cannot find the picture now. I saw that way back before. Then they moved the Seaside Hotel when they started to build the Royal Hawaiian Hotel. They moved it across the street where the, I think, it's just about where the International Market Place is.

MK: And what kind of work did your father do at the Seaside?

RS: I guess it was general, everything.

MK: And later on he worked for the Outrigger Canoe Club. How did he get involved with the Outrigger Canoe Club?

RS: Well, the story was told to me by old Jack MacKenzie who passed away quite a few years back, the (uncle) of Jimmy MacKenzie that owned MacKenzie Tours and all that. And he financed Jimmy MacKenzie also. Jack told me that Alexander Hume Ford was a guest at the Seaside Hotel and he just came out and talked to my father about the empty lot on the Diamond Head side on the beach and told my father why don't we start a boys' swimming club or something like that. And then Alexander Hume Ford and my dad went over on the Kāhala side of Diamond Head and picked up a grass shack, just wide and square enough to start a shower, and my dad piped some water from Seaside Hotel under the sand to start that shower and the club there. In other words, they (borrowed) the water.

(Laughter)

RS: And from that time on came up and when the Outrigger Canoe Club was built my dad was manager of that club for over twenty-five years. Prior to that my family lived on Tusitala [Street]. And then that's where my oldest brother was born. Then they moved to Outrigger Canoe Club where my second brother and my sister was born. Then they moved over to 'Ōhūa Lane, what today is 'Ōhūa Avenue. That's where I was born.

MK: And when your father was at the OCC [Outrigger Canoe Club] working there, what kind of work did he do at OCC?

RS: Oh, he took care of overall everything and then he--mostly he was on the counter. They had a concession like thing where they have ice cream and candy and he used to keep all the locker keys for the lockers, surfboard lockers and everything and (when) any member used to come in, he knew what number it was already, he'd just pick it up and gave it to them.

MK: And then when you talked to your dad what kind of stories did he tell you about Outrigger Canoe Club and the members?

RS: Oh, the members were many prominent people, business people and all that from this island. They were mostly members from Outrigger. The Kahanamoku family, McKinneys, General McKinney's family and the Cassidys. "Dad" Center and all of them were members.

MK: You mentioned the Cassidys, were they the Cassidys from the Kālia side?

RS: Yeah. Judge [Charles] Cassidy. His wife was a---I think she was related to the Lucas family of Niu or something. She was a good swimmer. One of them went to some Olympics. Mrs. Cassidy or. . . . I forgot the other name.

MK: And so some real prominent people . . .

RS: Edric Cook, can remember that.

MK: . . . about the OCC [Outrigger Canoe Club]?

RS: Yeah.

MK: Okay. And then at the OCC they also had beach boys, right.

RS: Not exactly. They only---way back before--only to tend to the canoes like that and "Steamboat" [Samuel Mokuahi, Sr.] and I forgot his other name (Louis R. "Sally" Hale). But before that most of the beach boys were where the Moana Hui Nalu group.

MK: And you were saying your father worked for OCC for twenty-five years. After that . . .

RS: He worked over twenty-five years.

MK: What did he do?

RS: He went to Punahou School. And he was a caretaker of that Cooke Library.

MK: And how about your mother, during all the years, what kind of work did she do?

RS: Oh, she did housecleaning and cooking for families, baby-sitting, general things like that.

MK: And where did she do that work?

RS: Oh, for different people in Waikīkī.

MK: Would you remember some of the names of the families she worked for?

RS: Right now I cannot remember.

MK: Okay. Okay how about we go on to your life then, okay? When were you born?

RS: Nineteen-eighteen.

MK: And exactly where were you born?

RS: On 'Ōhua Lane, 123 'Ōhua.

MK: And what number are you in the family?

RS: I'm the fourth and the youngest.

MK: And earlier you were telling me the family lived in the Tusitala area first. What have you heard about that area from your family?

RS: Well, that's where Robert Louis Stevenson or somebody wrote a poem about that area on Tusitala and an old schoolteacher used to live there, Mrs. Flint and the husband was Jay Donovan Flint who used to referee the boxing matches and all that. I know that family was living there 'cause we used to stop by and we knew Mrs. Flint. We used to ask her if we could have some of the. . . . We used to call that fruit the spotted pear. We used to have fruits like that and mangoes along the way and there was some banana patch way back upon the---where the present Food Pantry is, right in that area.

MK: And then later after your family lived in Tusitala area they lived at Outrigger Canoe Club.

RS: Right.

MK: Now, where in the club did they live?

RS: I don't know. I wasn't there at the time and I didn't ask. All I remember is 'Ōhua Lane.

MK: Okay. Better move on to 'Ōhua Lane then, yeah.

RS: Yeah.

MK: Okay. When you were born at 123 'Ōhua Lane in those early days when you were small, what did your house look like?

RS: Oh, it was old wooden structure. We had so many rooms and you know the old days people can live, all sleep in one room on the floor and things like that so we rented part of the house to the Tada family and Mr. Tada used to be a cook for the Steiner family. And a few years later on the ma uka side, the Watanabe family rented part of the house.

MK: And you know that 'Ōhua Lane area, try and describe for me the people that were living on 'Ōhua Lane from Kalākaua Avenue and all the way up.

RS: Well, the 'Ewa side was mostly the church, St. Augustine Church. On the Diamond Head side was Okasako Store. Then the Akana family, Senator David Akana and Joe Akana and all of them. Next to that I think Mrs. Kobara, who was a Terada at the time, had the

property, I think she was there. Then next to that the people rent the place was the Horie family. Then we came over there next above that. Then there was an alley, ma uka of that going back to the rear of our home. Had the Akana, Mr. Akana, Chinese, and you know they were being raided, they were being raided for smoking opium.

And from that alley right there they had a wooden bridge across the river towards Paoakalani [Avenue] and right alongside of Asuka Camp, ma uka of that pathway was the Sunada family. I know I remember they had two sons and she was a widow and raised those guys and just lately I talked to, trying to get his name now, Sunada, Harvey Sunada. He had Radionics TV and Repair and all that right across Love's Bakery on Kapahulu Avenue and he has another brother that's working for some wholesaler, meat or something like that.

Then above that was a Yoshimura family and Takashige family. Both of them, Mr. Yoshimura and [Mr.] Takashige had taxi. They had taxi over there. They had a garage over there. (Next, David Naone's family and the Hiram Kaakuas' Hiram who was a famous football player whom they called the "Black Grange." Then the Kawasakis, then the Kuramoto Camp where several families lived, then the Nadamotos.) Then above that they had this Nadamoto family. Mr. Nadamoto was a producer, wholesaler. The oldest son used to work for Social Security but the number two son is that doctor. Doctor [Ichiro] Nadamoto. He's a specialist of some kind. And above that they had some Hawaiian family, big lot. The one that I remember who was there was the Kepo'o, Kepo'o family. Then came the Okada family and that's where--Kuhio Avenue hadn't gone through yet and above that Okada, was Kanekoa.

Then they had the church I think. I don't know. Maybe there was another family and then had a church. We call it the "Red Church," wooden structure, the Hawaiian church, and just ma uka of that, 'Ohua Lane ended, they had a big monkeypod tree in the middle of the road.

MK: Oh, that's how it ended.

RS: Yeah. Slight incline to the tree but on the 'Ewa side of that, gee I forgot, I cannot remember the family that lived there now. And then on Kuhio and 'Ohua on the ma uka side just 'Ewa of 'Ohua the Paul Strauss family, you know the surfer, his father them, they had a two-story house there and then next to Paul Strauss--they had Norman Hammond. H-A-M-M-O-N-D. They had some paint shop or something and then 'Ewa of that had the Tokioka nursery. Dr. Tokioka. He was a chiropractor or something then. You know then they became the owners of International Savings and Loan? That's the same family.

MK: How long did that family own the nursery in that area?

RS: I don't know whether they owned it or not but they were there since

I was a kid, small kid and just about across where Kealohilani and Kūhiō [Avenues] the Olds family, you know Judge Norman Olds? His parents were there, that's Nalani Olds', the entertainer's grandparents. Then just ma kai of that Kealohilani was the Carter. They used to call him--his brother was older, (Ed Carter), but the younger one was [Arthur] "Babe" Carter. He used to run all (the major) golf tournaments and all that up until he passed away about couple years back. (He was known as the most knowledgeable golf rules expert in Hawai'i.)

MK: Are any of the members of his family surviving, the Carter family?

RS: Oh yeah, the son is still living . . .

MK: What's his son's . . .

RS: And the wife is--"Babe" Carter's wife is McInerny family. You know McInerny. I think the son goes by Arthur Carter and as you go further down on the ma kai 'Ewa corner of Lili'uokalani and Kūhiō [Avenues]. You know the famous Sammy Amalu? His mother was a schoolteacher. They lived over there.

MK: Oh, I didn't know that.

RS: Then if you go down on Lili'uokalani about a block or two I think it was somewhere between Prince Edward and Koa [Avenues], the Lishman family.

MK: Would any of the Lishmans be around yet?

RS: Yeah, I think what you call this "Buster" Lishman is still alive. I've seen him couple years ago. And on 'Ōhūa on the 'Ewa side, below Kūhiō, Leon Thevenin, T-H-E-V-E-N-I-N, or something like that. . . . I think he's living in Kona side now. His family was there and ma kai of that, I don't remember all of them who live on that side but I know, you know that police major now Hughes. I think it's his family. His parents or grandparents was living there.

MK: Is that police major Chester Hughes?

RS: Major Hughes, yeah, I don't know what his. . . . Anyway his grandparents was there. Then below that had one dispensary free for the neighborhood. I don't know whether it was run by the territory or the Catholic church. Then St. Augustine Church and at that time Father Valentin was [the priest there]. . . . And we used to wait for every Friday because he used to show movie, silent movie, free for the neighborhood so we always waited for a free movie. And because there were no theaters in Waikīkī what we used to do is we helped Father "V" clean the altar and things like that so we get a free movie, you know.

MK: And where did he show the movie though?

RS: Right outside under the big banyan tree. It's not there anymore but under a big banyan tree he put a big screen and we used to all sit and line up and get. . . . There was two entrances to the church ground, the one from 'Ōhūa Lane and one from Kalākaua Avenue.

MK: And so who used to go to the movies?

RS: All the people in the neighborhood because there's no theaters, no TV, no nothing those days and silent movie was the thing so we all waited for Friday, every Friday.

MK: And then you know that old St. Augustine's Church, what did it look like? 'Cause it's not the same as the one there now . . .

RS: No, it was all wooden structure with most of it the latticework all on the side. And the Father Valentin used to have his little cottage on the ma uka 'Ewa corner of the church (grounds).

MK: What do you remember about this Father Valentin?

RS: Oh, he was very tall, husky guy. And very nice person. You know do things for everybody in the neighborhood. I think he was well liked by everybody.

MK: And I notice that a lot of the names that you mention for 'Ōhūa Avenue on the 'Ewa side, they're Haole names, yeah. And then on the Diamond Head side it's mostly Japanese names. Do you have any idea why there was that kind of difference?

RS: I don't know because like on Kūhiō Avenue had Paul Strauss and them. I guess they were a little more well-to-do, eh.

(Laughter)

MK: Were the houses different from the kind of houses you folks were living in?

RS: Yeah, a little bit better houses but on the 'Ewa side below Kūhiō they developed a few empty lots over there before they developed this all, the Diamond Head side was older.

MK: And the house that your family lived in on 'Ōhūa Lane, did they own the house and land?

RS: No, all that area was Lili'uokalani Estate. So when our lease ran out my parents bought the property on Lemon Road.

MK: When did the lease run out?

RS: Right around 1931, somewhere in that area.

MK: And then when you were a small kid growing up on 'Ōhūa Lane, what

kinds of things did you folks do?

RS: Oh, we play on the street, uh. Was only dirt road, rocks. You kick stones and you break your nails and all that. We used to imitate football and polo and things like that.

MK: What, you folks used to go watch polo at . . .

RS: Yeah, down Kapi'olani Park . . .

MK: Kapi'olani Park.

RS: And the balls, we retrieve some balls and take off with them.

MK: And then when you were a small kid on 'Ōhūa Lane how about the beach side. Did you folks go beach a lot?

RS: Oh yeah, we spent a lot of time on the beach and there was--at the end of 'Ōhūa on the ma kai side Morisato family stayed--in their later years came to live there and there was a big restaurant over there and I forgot the name of the restaurant anyway. I know Jackie Kearns had something--he was a manager of old Jack Dempsey, the boxer, the boxing champion. He had something to do with that restaurant in the beginning. They can see towards Outrigger and also towards Moana Hotel and Royal Hawaiian from there, dining rooms.

MK: Was that restaurant called Dean's?

RS: Yeah, I think so. Dean's, yeah, Dean's. [Dean's-By-the-Sea.]

MK: Okay.

RS: I think that was an old hotel before and they converted to a restaurant, right out there they had a small wall like thing enclosure for us kids--we can swim, shallow, not too big, small, everywhere. Then on the 'Ewa side of that they had sand beach, was the sand beach big enough or wide enough so we used to play touch football from there to where Prince Kūhiō's home was. We used to play touch football there, had enough sand there and there was a small banyan tree over there just near Dean's Restaurant where these. . . .

Where "Steppy" DeRego, the DeRego family that--we used to call him "Steppy" because he was crippled one side, he was step and a half. But he used to be one of the top steel guitar players in Waikīkī, I mean professional musicians. They used to play over there and also on the--they have a stone wall from where the Dean's [restaurant] was and the Morisato family right next. They had a stone wall all the way till Kapahulu Avenue. The wall was about, I would say about less than two feet high and the young guys used to come from all over the island, Kalihi, Pālāma, all over and they used to call 'em the "Stonewall Gang." And they used to, from there, the guys

were lined up all the way till, past Paoakalani [Avenue] around there, all sitting on the wall and they're all playing music, Hawaiian music and people used to come and gather and watch, watch all that.

MK: About what part of the day were they playing the Hawaiian music?

RS: Oh, in the evening. In the day sometimes under the banyan tree they fool around but mostly in the evenings. All the people from all--that's why we knew people from Kalihi, Pālana, all other areas. They used to come down to Stonewall and we used to call it the Stonewall 'cause right below that had all rocks and ocean already, no more beach there before.

MK: I think that Stonewall Gang is kind of well known, yeah.

RS: Yeah, and we used to have surfboards, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, all numbered "Stonewall" and the numbers on them. We used to make our own surfboards. We used to go down to Lewers and Cooke lumberyard, buy the lumber, four-inch thick redwood lumber about twenty inches wide or twenty-four inch and we used to cut it down and make surfboards out of it. Twelve-foot, fourteen-footers.

MK: They used to be pretty heavy, back then.

RS: Oh yeah, it was really heavy, but I lived only half a block from the ocean so it's not bad and my dad got one white pine board which is lighter, he got it from some neighbor at the Outrigger Canoe Club. That was a good board, just lighter.

MK: How did you folks learn how to surf and swim in those days?

RS: Oh, we had to learn by ourselves. Nobody teaches you how to swim but my brother, number two, my second brother, he's still alive yet, number two in the family, he swam against Buddy Crabbe, Buster Crabbe's brother at Waikīkī Natatorium. You know the same as Buster Crabbe that's the brother. See Buster Crabbe's parents and Buster were members of old Outrigger Canoe Club and through them the family--we were the first ones in Waikīkī to have the Silver King pigeon.

MK: What's that?

RS: You know they have different kind of pigeons. Silver King at that time was really rare. It was a big husky one, it's not white, but off-color and we raised those pigeons on 'Ōhūa Lane.

MK: Oh. So you folks had kind of a lot of activities then yeah, 'Ōhūa Lane kids?

RS: Oh yeah, we'd run around and we'd go swimming and surfboard and play on the street because no playground those days.

MK: And then how about going towards the Diamond Head side, Kapi'olani Park and the zoo, what did you folks do in that area?

RS: Oh, we used to go there. They had a pond by where the old bandstand was below the [Waikiki] Shell now and they used to have some houses right Diamond Head of Kapahulu Avenue as the beach goes out that way. There were houses there, old houses. We used to walk along the wall and go down and after the houses there was one empty lot. Then Queen Surf came later. There was a home by another family. I forgot their name. Then Chris Holmes bought it. After Chris Holmes sold it then it became the Queen Surf nightclub. And next to that was the aquarium and after the aquarium came Public Baths. They moved Public Baths slightly Diamond Head now. Then after that they had the park and they built the Natatorium, the War Memorial Natatorium.

MK: What did the old aquarium look like, what kinds of things were in there in the old days?

RS: Fish, Hawaiian, you know the ones in the Hawaiian Islands, not too big. It was small but I forgot what day it was, every Tuesday or Monday was free day so we used to go roller skate right inside there and come right out. We only went there when it was free.

MK: And then next to the aquarium you said there were Public Baths.

RS: Right.

MK: What were the Public Baths anyway?

RS: Oh, people can go in there and just use the locker and take a shower there to change to go swimming.

MK: And then the Natatorium, did you go there, too, to go swimming?

RS: Not competitively. We used to go and we used to dive underneath that thing, that was really something great. We went under. . . . If you get stuck, you get stuck over there and nobody can rescue you go under and all along the perimeter of that tank.

MK: So you folks used to swim underneath and come out into the open ocean then?

RS: No, you cannot because if you going down it's on both sides on the Diamond Head side and on 'Ewa side this big outlet so the water can--just like a round pipe, so the water can circulate in there.

MK: But you couldn't go out then, you couldn't swim underneath?

RS: Well, I never tried to. When I was a kid I never tried to go down by the pipe but there's several outlets like that going out for. . . .

MK: And then how about when your . . .

RS: Beyond that was you call it Sans Souci and there was a pier out there. We used to hook 'oama and papio in season and you go past that, there was some homes (along) the way. Then the Elks Club. The Elks Club was I think was a old Castle home, multi-story stuck out in the ocean with columns and from when you're down Kuhio Beach you look towards Diamond Head you can see or from Royal Hawaiian Hotel you can see the Elks Club sticking up at the point there.

MK: It stuck out.

RS: Yeah. And then next to that had the Castle home, two of them. Then further down had--I forgot somebody else's houses, and then right on the corner that's where "Dad" Center has his house.

MK: And then someone told me about a Mr. Matsuzawa. He used to have a little stand.

RS: He used to have a wagon, you know the push wagon. In fact at one time he was storing his wagon in our garage-like thing we had on 'Ōhūa Lane. They used to push it all the way to the end of--we used to call it end of the car line. In the beginning the streetcar line used to end right by the Public Baths. Then they extended it to Ponī Mō'ī Road and he used to push it every day out there, push it back.

MK: And what kinds of things was Mr. Matsuzawa selling?

RS: Oh, like candies you know, things like that.

MK: So anybody who got off the streetcar or the neighborhood kids would go buy from him?

RS: Yeah. Or the people who come to the park.

MK: And then I was wondering what else was there at Kapi'olani Park in the old days?

RS: Oh, they had the tennis courts there, and then they had---where the present Shell is way ma kai of that used to be at the bandstand there and just Diamond Head of that they used to have a square lily pond and then the tennis court. Then beyond that they had a big fountain. I think it was tall. If I remember correctly I think it was donated by some Japan or something like that. It was made of--the structure look like made of copper but now they have one Mrs. Dillingham donated way further down. They used to have all kiawe trees around and where the present Shell is used to be a racetrack, automobile racetrack.

MK: Oh, I didn't know that.

RS: Yeah. Automobile racetrack, and the double-wing plane used to land

inside and the polo field was within that racetrack and at one time I think they had couple of horse races, too, in there.

MK: And then how about the zoo area, as kids did you folks go zoo a lot?

RS: Well, we went there, yeah. But it was a lot of ditches--they filled in most of that place now. Then from the ditches used to come down to the river I think between right where Kapahulu Avenue is and Kapahulu Avenue used to be known as "Make." Everybody say "Make," M-A-K-E, but it's supposed to be Makee. That was Makee Road. That's all we had. We didn't have Kapahulu Avenue. And after Kapahulu Avenue came down then you only have a short two block Makee Road, right by Jefferson School on Kūhiō Avenue today but all the other side was all part of the park and had these date palms growing and ditches, water.

MK: Some other people used to tell me that they used to go catch 'o'opu.

RS: 'O'opu, yeah. Had all kinds of things like that.

MK: They used to like to eat the dates.

RS: Oh the dates from there along the racetrack just back of where that Waikīkī Shell is, all date palms used to be all along there. Some were too high. We used to throw stones, [to knock down] nice big dates.

MK: You said they don't have them anymore.

RS: (I just noticed some date trees still there just ma uka of the Waikīkī Shell.)

MK: And then other people told me that they used to go play around 'Āinahau area, did you folks go 'Āinahau, too?

RS: Yeah.

MK: What did you folks do in the 'Āinahau side?

RS: Well, just roam around the barrier and then 'Āinahau area, we considered 'Āinahau, Tusitala along to Ka'iulani Avenue and all that--we call that 'Āinahau area.

MK: What was in that area when you were a kid?

RS: All old homes. Then 'Ewa of Ka'iulani [Avenue] used to be where Fullard-Leo was on da kine. And right above that used to be the Hikida family who worked for the [Moana Hotel]. . . . Not on Ka'iulani but inside further 'Ewa because they got through a road way across from the 'Ewa portion of Moana Hotel. That's where the Hikida family and. . . .

MK: Is it Maeda?

RS: No, Maeda was in the back--Maeda and Fukuda was back [closer to] the Royal [Hawaiian Hotel] employees' cottages.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

MK: You were saying Hikida and. . . .

RS: Another family. . . .

MK: Takenaka?

RS: Takenaka family was over there. And then later on I think the Kaji family. They were all employees of hotel and Mr. Kaji was taking care of that, the engine room and the carpenter shops and Fukuda was taking care of the engine room side. The son later became a assistant manager or something Royal Hawaiian, Sheraton. He lives on Auwaiolimu Drive. Takenaka, I don't know where. Hikidas are scattered around.

MK: And then there was a Chow family, too.

RS: Yeah, Chow family there, too. Chow family was back where the Royal, I think was the Royal yeah, Diamond Head side where the Royal [Hawaiian Hotel] employees' cottage.

MK: So you folks used to go way down there

RS: We used to go there yeah. We knew all each other. We used to go play down there and we used to watch those guys stealing bananas and we'd steal 'em from them.

(Laughter)

MK: You got it the easy way then.

RS: Because 'Ewa of that Moana employees' cottages, they had some Chinese people raising--oh, they had big pigeon loft and they used to raise yams and then bananas. Used to be a banana patch there.

MK: Would you know who the Chinese people were?

RS: No. That was before they dug the Ala Wai Canal.

MK: How about Kālia side, did you folks ever go way down Kālia side when you were small kids?

RS: On the beach side but not on the--the farthest we went most of the

time was up to about--well we go in front of Ikesu [Teahouse] that place but most of the time we used to go to Pierpoint. See where the lagoon is, down Hilton lagoon up there, used to be a pier and we used to go hook 'oama and things like that.

MK: So in the old days fishing in Waikīkī was pretty good then, yeah?

RS: Oh yeah, we knew when--the old days, 'oama, and pāpio and moi li'i used to run in schools, baby ones. Today you don't see it anymore. We used to go early in the morning and hook it before we go to school. We know we say, "Eh," we find out, the word goes around that the moili'i's over here and the 'oama's over here. We had short bamboos, get little shrimp or something and we put that one, we hook it up. We used to hook one five-pound bag, flour bag. We hook that amount, we'd go home already because we'd have to go to school, eh, and by the time we get through our parents used to deep fry it and then that's for our dinner.

MK: Pretty good then.

RS: Yeah. And like my brother used to walk down go swimming after school or something like that. And just before the sunset, go around by back of the Dean's, you know, we used to know a couple of squid holes, he'e holes, find some sharp stick or wire from somewhere, broke the thing, and the thing come out and grab it and bring it home. That's for dinner, too.

And we used to walk along--I used to go walk along the wall up to where Queen Surf was down in that area, just about getting dark, I used to look for squid, too. I didn't tell anybody because they come around just before that. They come around looking for food or something and you just grab 'em and take it home. And we used to go torching all around there from Public Bath all the way to maybe the Waikīkī Tavern. Some portions are deep so we come inside and our torch was--we put bags in a can and put kerosene in and used to go torching, pick up, scoop up with a net, scoop all kind of fish.

MK: Nowadays you don't hear about people going to Waikīkī to go fish.

RS: No. No more because I used to go with Kanekoa and all those elderly ones. We used to just--they rowed a boat and they go out and they lobster net right outside there. And I forgot his name, we used to go out spear right outside the Royal Hawaiian Hotel and go down and those days no goggles and things like that--only from the box--in a square box, we call it a "squid box," and had long wooden poles, spears, for deep water. We used to jab the uhus and the lobster and things like that. Used to be some lobster out there too, outside Royal Hawaiian Hotel on the 'Ewa side, quite a distance out.

But today you don't have those things and I used to go down, when the Hawaiians used to want līpoa, see līpoa is the one that's smelly. I used to go dive down (where) we used to surf and get

about one bag full, get full. We sell 'em to them for fifty cents and with that fifty cents we used to buy bread and pork'n'beans. If we don't go home for lunch we share, we broke the bread and made puka in the bread and we used to put pork'n'beans in and things like that we had that for lunch.

MK: That sounds 'ono.

RS: And that limu manuea we used to find right in front there or in front of the [Waikiki] Tavern, outside of Prince Kuhio's home. So whenever we wanted a different type of limu we used to know where to go. The one down outside Queen's Surf, that area used to have the one that is in brackish pools, limu waewae'iole. Over there they had that kind. And in that area when you go nighttime had slipper lobster, small ones. All that so we used to know all what is right outside and get tako all along the way too. And then outside Gray's Beach where Halekulani Hotel on the outside, right out there they had some place get good limu too. All along, limu manuea. And had some right in front of Outrigger [Canoe Club], right from where the water starts, only about not even ten feet out so sometimes I got lazy, I want some limu, I'd call up "Steamboat," I'd say, "Hey 'Boat,' get me some manuea."

He'd say, "Okay, come down."

After he'd get a bag for me.

MK: Now you've gotta really work to go find limu.

RS: Oh yeah. Because you know why is that, over there they filled it up with too much sand already, cover all the limu, see. And then besides that, today the people pull the limu. The roots come out so it won't grow. That's why I was thinking of seeing some legislators to pass a law that they gotta make it illegal to pull the limu, they have to cut it. Then you won't have problems, get plenty limu. You gotta think of the next generation, eh. That is a good law that they should pass, you know. If anybody's caught, especially nowadays, Samoans, these Koreans and Vietnamese, they go and take and they go and sell their stuff and you can tell some of them have the roots on it. If they are intelligent and thoughtful they would cut it, trim it. Then you won't have problem of running out of limu.

MK: So it seems like in Waikiki you have a lot of water activities. You go surf, go swim and then go fish, get limu yeah.

RS: Yeah. Go get limu, squidding, and with net later on we got to know how to purchase net and we go and we call it pa'ipa'i, eh. Or we lay the net. Before only the Hawaiians had that net but we used to help them, eh, get some fish. But later on we find out how to acquire the nets and we lay the nets ourselves then. And nighttime, even daytime we know where the school of fish is, pa'ipa'i, we chase 'em right inside, if we see weke schools in

front of Moana Hotel or like past where "Steamboat" those guys used to go and get. Surround the 'oama in front the Outrigger [Canoe Club]. I used to have my share too. Oh, had a lot of fish over there, all kinds.

MK: And then those old days, when you got the fish, you folks took it back to the neighborhood?

RS: Yeah, we share. You take some, I take some. That's food.

MK: In the old days when you were living 'Ōhūa Avenue, were there peddlers that came by your place like manapua man or . . .

RS: Oh, yeah.

MK: . . . vegetable man.

RS: The manapua man used to have a pole over his shoulder and both ends had the cans, right. I forgot what his name was, Apana or something like that. When he come we all knew. He's the only guy who used to come with that, you know, cans.

MK: And what kinds of stuff did he sell those days?

RS: Oh, manapua and chow fun. Chow fun--one little package was five cents. Today probably you gotta pay a dollar.

MK: Yeah. And then let's see, when you were small were the Japanese people in the area still having like bon odori or hanamatsuri your time?

RS: A couple of times they had something going on at the Asuka Camp. Of course, I saw quite a few people living in that camp. This was before they [Asukas] bought the place on Kuhio Avenue. They had the Asuka Camp on the other side (off) Paoakalani [Avenue].

MK: That was the one that was near the Japanese[-language] school.

RS: Ma kai of the Japanese school. Asuka Camp was right next to the Japanese school. It was on the 'Ewa side between the river and Paoakalani 'cause there was a river running between 'Ōhūa and Paoakalani.

MK: Did you folks play around over there when you were small?

RS: Oh, all around there, yeah. Until they dug the Ala Wai. They covered it up. When they dug the Ala Wai Canal it covered all that up.

MK: So no more stream then?

RS: No, because right in between about the middle if they dig where the sand is on Kuhio Beach, if you dig deep enough you can see there's

two culverts like under Kalākaua Avenue. Used to be the outlet for the river.

MK: So when it rained did you folks have problems with flooding in that area before the Ala Wai Canal?

RS: No, only came in the stream back there.

MK: And then I noticed that after you folks lived 'Ōhua and the lease ran out you folks lived Lemon Road. Two-five-seven-two [Lemon Road] you said yeah? Did you folks buy the house at Lemon Road?

RS: We bought that, yeah.

MK: And from whom did you buy it?

RS: From Mrs. Green. According to this [1935 tax-key] map it's E.M. Green, Mrs. Green sold it to my mother.

MK: And then when you folks moved to Lemon Road who were your neighbors in that neighborhood?

RS: My neighbors were not the Victors, the Kawasaki family was there right next. Kawasaki, they're not listed here because they didn't own the land and Kobaras came a little later. There was some other family before . . .

MK: Paoakalani side, yeah?

RS: Yeah. Then over here, the DeFries family and this Kawasaki and right next was--had about three cottages. The one right behind us was the Mineishi. The Mineishi family. Kelleys were here. After Kelleys, the Ahakuelos came in after that. John Williams and all of them was over here . . .

MK: "Bayaw" Williams family. Closer to the corner of Paoakalani, yeah.

RS: Yeah, and Sam Manu was on the corner and Simeon Akaka on the . . .

MK: Opposite corner.

RS: Yeah.

MK: Paoakalani area.

RS: Yeah, Paoakalani [Avenue] and Cartwright [Road]. After da kine came the DeFries family. Akaka and DeFries were right next. They used to own all of these over here. In fact where the Kobaras were and my property now. That all used to be DeFries way back.

MK: You were telling me that you moved to this Lemon Road house, how did this house look like?

RS: Oh, a wooden cottage. And we had to scrape, repaint it, fix a little bit, was all.

MK: And then how about the houses in your neighborhood, what did they look like?

RS: All wooden houses.

MK: All wooden houses. Were they any different from the ones that were on 'Ōhūa Avenue?

RS: Well, almost the same but slightly better.

MK: Slightly better?

RS: Yeah.

MK: Okay. And when you folks moved to the Lemon Road house you were getting a little bit older. What kinds of things did you do in the neighborhood when you were living Lemon Road?

RS: Oh, by that time I was going to the intermediate school I think. I used to play sports when I was in intermediate school and still then I used to clean the yard once every day, sweep and water the lawn for Mr. Paul Stermer. It's off Lili'uokalani Avenue, make for a dollar a week.

MK: Oh, since you mentioned your yardwork, tell me about the time that you used to sell papers and shine shoes in Waikīkī when you went to . . .

RS: Oh, when I was . . .

MK: Waikīkī School.

RS: Elementary school, yeah. I used to--morning paper, they used to drop the paper four o'clock in the morning on the front step and you can hear it because our wooden steps you know, 'Ōhūa Lane. Then I used to get on my bicycle and I had about a half a dozen regular customers and I put the paper there and then they have a nickel on the window sill or under the rug in front, pick it up and by the time I get home my grandmother and mother have cooked rice and things for breakfast already. Eat a fast breakfast and take off down to Lili'uokalani and Kalākaua [Avenues]. That was my corner to sell papers till time to go to school. And not every day afternoon, but some afternoons and on weekends we used to go shoe shine along up to our areas, up to Ka'iulani Avenue from 'Ōhūa, all that area inside there.

MK: What, you folks had kind of like unwritten rule as to which area was your area and which area was somebody else's area?

RS: Yeah. Like my paper--that was my corner but as far as shoe shine

and things it was open. You can go all around inside there, not. . . .

MK: And how was your business, shoe shining?

RS: Just make a few cents so we can you know buy ice cream or things like that, you know.

MK: And then where did you go to elementary school?

RS: Waikīkī School.

MK: Where was that your time?

RS: Oh, it was on Hamohamo Road. But this is Waikīkī School right here. Mrs. [Emma] Kaawakauo was our schoolteacher there. Waikīkī School was right about this area.

MK: What do you remember most about your elementary school days?

RS: Well, our principal was Mrs. [Mabel] King. She used to live on Kālia Road back of Royal Hawaiian Hotel. And I remember a couple of teachers, Mrs. Harrison, Mrs. Kaawakauo, and Mrs. Lam. You know that Eddie Lam service station and all that. Mrs. Lam, she was a schoolteacher. Mrs. Harrison, later on the husband had a taxi stand right across from where the Mitsukoshi building is, right in that area. And we used to--we had pretty good garden because every so often they tell us students to go get the cow manure from the dairy by Monsarrat [Avenue] and Hirata Dairy and some other dairy. Monsarrat and above Kaunaoa [Street] that area. Martin Dairy was above Campbell [Avenue]. Used to go get cow manure and spread it for the garden and all that.

MK: A lot of people remember the gardens, at Waikīkī Elementary School.

RS: The reason why, because the cow manure made it good.

(Laughter)

MK: We are told that they were so good that they used to win a lot of prizes.

RS: Yeah. We used to--had to go and get it, you know. Hirata Dairy was where Diamond Head Circle is and the other one was. . .

MK: Makini Street . . .

RS: Gomes. Had a big--you know where the present Waikīkī Elementary is? All the way down to--had a big area there, Gomes family. Then the Hirata was up. Then the Tyau family had a store and then further up from that, that Martin family. That's where "Mahjong" [Yoshimura] move over there now right there.

MK: Uh huh, Kaunaoa Street yeah.

RS: Then there was all the kind of dairies and stuff like that. We used to run all around there and climb up on the side of Diamond Head and all that. Used to climb on the side. Then get da kine corrugated roofing, make it just like a sled and go slide down.

MK: You folks used to have a lot of fun then.

RS: Oh, we did all kind of things.

MK: And then what did you think about your schooling at Waikīkī?

RS: Well, was all right.

MK: And then you went to Washington Intermediate. And you were telling me that one of highlights of your time at Washington Intermediate was sports.

RS: Yeah, I was all-around athlete.

MK: What kind of sports did you get involved in?

RS: Football, basketball, baseball, track, swimming. I didn't pursue that in high school because I got fed up with that which I regret.

MK: Oh. How about McKinley [High School] though?

RS: McKinley my first year---those days they didn't call it jayvee or varsity, they used to call 'em junior team and senior team. My first year, Father [David] Bray offered me a scholarship to go Iolani [School] but I turned him down and I went to McKinley because I wanted to make a trip to the Mainland and my first year I never did go to the junior team, I went to the senior team. And second game I was first team already and all the way through I was---in my last year I was co-captain, but come to basketball and baseball and things like that they used to tell us we have to buy our own equipment, all that stuff so I said I'm not playing so I didn't play the other sports. See football they furnish us with full practice uniform and full game uniform so that was all right but I'm not gonna buy any equipment to play sports.

MK: And then you graduated in '37 yeah?

RS: Yeah.

MK: How was your team 1937 football team, McKinley?

RS: Oh, that team was '36 team.

MK: Oh, '36 team.

RS: Because that's fall you see. Oh we came up almost to the top. We

lost the championship.

MK: Oh, but you folks got into the championship game?

RS: Yeah. But we were---all the way we didn't mind--all the time we were contenders, all three years.

MK: All three years. And then when I talked with "Mahjong" Yoshimura, he was telling me about in Waikīkī you folks had Nami- no- Kai baseball or. . . .

RS: Softball.

MK: Yeah. Were you involved in those things?

RS: Yeah. We just played a little bit.

MK: How about, I don't know if it's your time, but I heard that there used to be a football team called, "G-men" that used to play out at Waikīkī. Is that your time?

RS: Well, I was coaching the 130-pound League, Smile Cafe football team. After high school I was coaching that team.

MK: Is that the Smile Cafe team?

RS: Yeah. We took championship.

MK: And then so that Smile Cafe team, were they Kālia kids that . . .

RS: Kālia kids and all around in there you know.

MK: Oh. So you know Sam Uyehara then?

RS: Oh yeah.

MK: Oh. We interviewed him, too.

RS: Yeah, after high school and I became of age I worked part-time for him before I got on the police force.

MK: At Smile Cafe?

RS: Yeah. I helped behind the bar, bartend and then I was--we call it bouncer, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, three days.

MK: So what did Smile Cafe look like those days?

RS: Oh, wooden structure, one regular restaurant. Sports, most of the University [of Hawai'i] guys used to come down there, University graduates, you know, sports athletes, sports writers.

MK: And where was Smile Cafe in the old days?

RS: It's right where Ala Moana Boulevard comes into Kalākaua Avenue. On the ma kai side of Kalākaua.

MK: And what was in that area when you used to work for Sam?

RS: Oh, they had a cab stand and Baker's photo studio on the 'Ewa side, had all that and prior to that Smile Cafe they used to have amusement park right there--roller coaster, you know the one, Big Dipper and all that stuff.

MK: And someone mentioned there used to be a dance hall.

RS: Dance hall, yeah.

MK: And were there any other eating places near Sam's?

RS: Oh, that Barbecue Inn was further toward Diamond Head, the famous Barbecue Inn, was really famous those days. It was right where that service station on, you know where the army property is there?

MK: Fort DeRussy.

RS: Fort DeRussy. Then the service station. Then you go along from Ala Moana Boulevard. Right there was a Barbecue Inn. Then after that they had the cottage, then that Palm Tree Inn.

MK: And who owned Barbecue Inn?

RS: At that time I know the Shikata family was running it, Joe Shikata. That time was considered good food.

MK: Was well known?

RS: Yeah. And then just kitty corner across that was Waikīkī Lau Yee Chai.

MK: You mentioned you worked for Sam Uyehara but what other odd jobs did you have after graduation?

RS: Oh, I worked part-time stevedoring. Yeah. They only call you on a certain time that's all and, odd job. Then I went to work for construction at Mōkapu Naval Base, laying, drying that tar, laying tar on the water joints, on the water line. Hot, really hot and sun and you get burned by the tar and. . . . Then somebody told me there's an opening down Pearl Harbor [Naval Shipyard] with some construction company. They making concrete piles which paid little better than Mōkapu so I took that job. But we had to get up early and take the ferry across to Ford Island to do the work.

In the meantime I took an examination for--first, the first one I took was for security at Kane'ohe Mental Hospital. And at the same

time I took the exam for the police and I knew I passed both but I just wanted to brush up. Then they called me at the hospital. I said no but I have another job. I didn't wanna go. Then I waited while I was working at construction Ford Island--they called me to go in the police department so I went in. I could have got in several months--about six months earlier but this civil service director, he was working personnel police--he held me back. He didn't like me because I got involved with his pet boys from Mid-Pacific [Institute].

MK: So you joined the police force in 1940?

RS: Right.

MK: And when you joined the police force in 1940 that's just one year before the war and so I was wondering, how did the World War II years affect you in Waikīkī?

RS: Oh, it didn't affect me at all because I was in the police department and I knew how to get things.

MK: And then during the war years what did Waikīkī look like, you know no tourists so. . . .

RS: Well, there were mostly servicemen. A lot of servicemen, a lot of them was stationed up Fort Ruger, Fort DeRussy, and there used to be a lot of servicemen coming down to the area the beach.

MK: And being a policeman what did you think about crime in Waikīkī in the early days, say '40s and '50s?

RS: Well, wasn't like today you know. I think it's bad today because of drugs. People take drugs and they get hallucinations. You know they wanna buy more drugs and they do anything to get drugs.

MK: How long did you stay in the police force?

RS: Thirty-four years.

MK: Thirty-four years. And you retired as a. . . .

RS: Lieutenant.

MK: Lieutenant. Long time then.

RS: I think long enough.

MK: Now I'm gonna ask you, looking back I wanna know what kind of changes you noticed in Waikīkī, like back in the '20s.

RS: Oh, in the '20s was really wonderful because you can leave your doors wide open. Nobody comes in the house. You can go and if you want some foods you know where to go get mangoes or where to go get

coconut. When we were kids we go and ask the people can we have some and they'll give us. Okay, you know.

MK: And you were telling me about the Ala Wai Canal coming up and the Royal Hawaiian [Hotel].

RS: Yeah, when the Royal Hawaiian [Hotel] was being built like that I used to take the gang from Kuhio area--I used to say, "Hey, you guys wanna eat ice-cream cone?"

Say, "Yeah, yeah, yeah." So I take about four or five and go walk along the beach and we go and see my father. We want ice cream so he gave all of us. That was a treat those days.

When they used to have chowder parties at the Outrigger Canoe Club. They had the wooden structure dance hall, two floors. Underneath they had canoes and all that and on top was a dance floor, quite a large one. They used to make chowder parties and when we were kids we used to help my father peel potatoes and all that. Used to get a dollar each or something. He used to run things like that see.

Then later on they moved up the pavilion (along) Kalākaua Avenue. And that's where a lot of dances used to go on. That's where I met Alfred Apaka's wife-to-be, Edna Blake. . . . She was singing in a band.

And like Ala Wai Canal well, I didn't tell anybody. There used to be a territorial fair over there. And we used to---the bridge is on 'Ōhūa Avenue, end of 'Ōhūa see, so we used to peel coconuts and sell it right at the entrance to the bridge. People buy because never had too many coconuts around the island. We used to sell coconuts all that.

And when they came I used to go later on when the fair was closed already. The bridge was still there, used to go across. I didn't tell anybody anything. I used to go along the banks. Didn't have the wall though, just had sloping bank and you know the red Hawaiian crab? They have holes about eight to ten inches apart, round holes about two-inch diameter or something. When you spot that you know there's a crab hole there. So I used to put my foot on one side. So you know those young kid time your fingers are tender, that's why I took--didn't have any gloves so I put handkerchief and I go in there, I grab the crab and I put it in my bag and I pick up enough, I take it home for my mother to cook for us eat. I didn't tell anybody that and I went there just before dark and you know you have secrets like that you don't let it out. 'Cause everybody will do it. Till today they ask me. I'll tell them I'll bet you there's a crab in there. I know there is. I found out by myself. I said yeah. You gotta learn, know the things by trying.

MK: So after the Ala Wai came up you could do that then yeah, along the

canal.

RS: Yeah. At one stage, I think when I was in intermediate school, they used to have a lot of clam right at the entrance of that, you know the Pālolo Stream? Other end of Ala Wai Golf Course. Right there a lot of clams but those other guys the mud was muddy, dark. What I used to---I used to make a trap like this with a pole made out of galvanized wire. I'd go over there and scoop the clams and put it in the boat. I didn't have to dive in the murky muddy water like the other guys. But today they don't have any clam there.

MK: All gone, yeah.

RS: Yeah.

MK: Then you lived Waikīkī till what year?

RS: I think early '60s.

MK: When you look back what do you think were the major changes that you saw in your lifetime in Waikīkī?

RS: Oh, the major changes is all the concrete jungle. Now you know all that stuff coming up and being so overcrowded, not like used to be in the beaches they put sand on where you can get fish before and all that. Great difference, cost of living like that because of those things coming up.

MK: When you look back as a former resident of Waikīkī, what are your feelings about Waikīkī?

RS: Well, you don't wanna live there because it's not like the old days. Everything is--everybody's friendly. You can do this and that. You can go and get it. You know fishing and getting the limu, things like that. It's a different life there now. Too much congestion.

MK: Okay, I'm gonna end the tape here then, okay.

RS: Okay.

END OF INTERVIEW

WAIKĪKĪ, 1900 - 1985: ORAL HISTORIES

Volume I

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